



# *Novus* as the Magnum Opus of the Musico-Spiritual Ministrations of Carlos Santana: An Appraisal of his Works

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## ABSTRACT

The music of Santana, arguably, magnificently embodies the virtuosity and raw creativity of the sixties, seventies and eighties, the “cool” of the nineties and twenties and the oneness and spiritual essence of the human race. It has therefore demonstrated the resilient capacity for continually reaching and sensitively touching successive generations of fans of multicultural extraction with passionate musical idioms, which are a fusion of rock, jazz, blues, soul and Latin and, therefore, serving a musical menu of multicultural melodic phraseology that is as unique as it is instantly identifiable, globally. From the sixties to the present and utilizing personnel from variegated cultural and genre setting, Santana's music has become an event of global culture, transcending genre, crossing national boundaries and cultures and creating music that has emerged the soundtrack for the world. The paper subjects the works of Carlos Santana to critical analysis

covering the musical idioms and lyrical idiomatic expressions from the perspective of the universalism of his lyricism and opines that there is a religio-philosophical stream of thoughts that runs through his albums over a timeframe of more than three decades, from *Santana I* (1969) to *Shaman* (2002) from which “Novus” is taken. The paper opines that “Novus,” a song that suavely combines canal love and the eternity of Divine Love, is the *magnum opus* of Santana's musical ministrations and mission in which he has consistently advocated harmony in humanity from the perspective of Mayan philosophies and shamanism. Same as his other works with spiritual essence, “Novus,” transcends religion and touches the human spirit irrespective of color or creed, station or location. “Novus,” the paper concludes, is vintage Carlos Santana—the multidimensional spirit; it represents the quintessence of the man; it is his magnum opus and, therefore, valedictory.

**Key Words:**

•*Virtuosity* •*Multicultural* •*Multi-genre* •*Modernity* •*Universal lyricism*  
•*Shamanism*.

## Introduction

As intelligent can design be? And how encompassing? In *False Flat*, Aaron Betsky and Adam EArt appreciation, be it music, dance, painting or any other art form is, generally, subjective. Like “beauty,” which “is in the eye of the beholder,” the assessment as beautiful or otherwise of an art form is a function of the listener's/holder's/spectator's opinion; opinion informed and formed by factors that could and may defy rationalization by any other individual. For instance, while a particular music would stir tears from the eyes of one listener, it may constitute an irritant to another; this is undoubtedly a result of the difference in the backgrounds, musical tastes and experiences of both listeners. In other words, like artwork, music lends itself readily to interpretations and critical analysis that are informed by the experience, circumstance and resultant perception of every critic or scholar. Fyfe, (2008) offers that if we take a thousand critics to an art gallery, you may end up with one thousand and five hundred interpretations of every artwork found there. In consonance with this, Barna (1997:21) offers that: “even the most brilliant team of people would see different elements and nuances in a Picasso or Rembrandt;” the divergence

of views on artwork is basically the same with the outcome of the works of music critics.

This effort appraises the musical works of Carlos Santana from the first album, *Santana I* (1969) to *Shaman* (2002); “Novus” the *raison d’être* of this effort is contained in *Shaman* and the objective of the effort is to place “Novus” in proper perspective in comparison with the other works of Santana selected from his extensive discography within the thematic context of his musico-spiritual ministrations. The study covers a timeframe of more than three decades of his public performance and recording; effort is made to present the records and albums in the order of their chronological age. A major limitation in this effort is the fact that the author has no knowledge whatsoever of Latin American language that is used in many of the works of Santana; the effort is, therefore, limited to those songs that are delivered in English.

### **Music: A Brief Definition**

Guiseppe Manzini (1805-1872) perceives music as “an echo of the invisible world; one note of the divine concord which the entire universe is destined one day to sound.” (Edwards, 1963:430) In a similar vein, Osai (2002) defines music as the harmonious voice of the divine, which is the intermediary between mind and matter. Contributing to this discourse, the German novelist Barthold Auerbach (1812-1882) posits that music “washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.” Giving a more earthy definition, Jacobs (1963:251) offers that music is “the art of combining sounds with a view to beauty of form and expression of emotion.” From a comparative perspective of art forms, Richter offers that music “is the only one of the fine arts in which not only man, but all other animals, have a common property—mice, elephants, spiders and birds.” (Edwards, 1963:431) For the English Poet, William Shenstone (1714-1768) “the lines of poetry, the periods of prose and even the text of scripture most frequently recollected and quoted, are those which are felt to be preeminently musical.” Furthering on the debate, Osai (2003:29) offers that music “limitlessly extends the frontiers of the communicative arts and timelessly evokes diverse emotions with or without words.” In other words, with or without words, the appreciation of music and its effects on every living being and thing are universal in the real sense of the word universal. Regarding the utility of music in affecting the thoughts of people Elizabeth

prophet, the renowned authority in self-transcendence offers that “people are more swayed by music than by high-sounding phrases...music is the most wonderful thing in the universe to actually raise the spirits.” (Prophet, 1994:34-6).

### **The Works of Carlos Santana: A Cursory Appraisal**

Santana's music, it has been argued, magnificently embodies the virtuosity and raw creativity of the sixties, seventies and eighties, the “cool” of the nineties and twenties and the oneness and spiritual essence of the human race. It has therefore demonstrated the resilient capacity for continually reaching and sensitively touching successive new generations of fans of multicultural extraction with passionate musical idioms, which are a fusion of rock, jazz, blues, soul and Latin and multicultural musical phraseology that is as unique as it is instantly identifiable, globally. From the sixties to the present and utilizing personnel from variegated cultural and genre setting, Santana's music has become an event of global culture, transcending genre, crossing national boundaries and cultures and creating music that has emerged the soundtrack for the world. With his lifetime of music and achievement, Carlos Santana has become the architect of the soundtrack for the world. Santana has therefore proven to be a vehicle for giving form to the universality of popular music and, consequently, propagating that “echo of the invisible world; one note...[of which] the entire universe is destined one day to sound.” (Edwards, 1963:430)

In an essay for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, McLane (1998) opines that Santana, quite literally, brought a generation of Latin American kids into the Rock and Roll community. Conversely, Fong-Torres (1998) holds that Santana introduced rockers to Afro-Latin rhythms and they did it almost unconsciously. The point to take home from these divergent yet synchronic positions is that Santana, a melting pot of black, white and Latino, took these ideas further by simply allowing each member of the band the freedom of artistic expression, which enabled them to tap from their variegated musical roots, be it Top 40, R&B, Afro-Cuban, Latin, Mexican, Spanish, Blues, Highlife, Apala or Jazz and work it into the mix and produced the novel sound that is now known as World Beat, global music, if you prefer. For instance, in the personnel of the first three albums, guitarist Carlos listened to B.B. King, an R&B guitarist of the old Negro spiritual order, and Gabor Szabo, a Hungarian gypsy guitarist with abundant Eastern influence.

Keyboardist Gregg Rolie focused his musical attention on Jimmy Smith, Paul McCartney and Mick Jagger—admix of robust traditional jazz and a combination of boy-next-door pop laced with rebellious lyricism. Congarist Michael Carabello was a disciple of Sly Stone and Jimi Hendrix—two African Americans noted for departing from the stereotypical black music genres and into a peculiar genre that found followership across the racial divide during the racially tense years of the sixties. Meanwhile, traps man Michael Shrieves was an adept of John Coltrane and Miles Davis, two giants of the jazz genre while percussionist Jose Chepito Areas listened to Eddie Palmieri and African Music laden with percussion. ([www.santana.com](http://www.santana.com))

It was the above *mélange* of instrumentalists, from different socioeconomic backgrounds, groomed and gowned by variegated musical influences that creatively forged what eventually emerged as that distinctive Santana sound, which defied classification within the context of the known musical genres of the era and inspired hip-swinging choreography that quickly found acceptability all over the world. For the purposes of further illustration, Carlos holds that “we took a *guaguanco*, which is an Afro-Cuban expression for a shuffle groove, and we added Hammond organ, guitar and tried to put a little electricity and rock-and-roll in it, and it became “Waiting”—the opening tract of the debut album (*Santana I*), which remained on the Billboard album chart for two years. (Fong-Torres, 1998)

Beyond the officially known members of the band, there were many musical collaborators who contribute to the Santana sound. One such collaborator is Michael Babatunde Olatunji, the Nigerian percussionist, who brought the musical mix of Highlife and Apala to the band and the song “Jingo” (*Santana I*) emerged.

## Between the Pop and the Musico-Spiritual Ministrations

After the disbandment of the first set that produced the first three albums, Carlos Santana experimented with a wide spectrum of musical genre. His contact with Guru Sri Chinmoy and Mahavishnu John McLaughlin introduced him to Eastern religion and its musical correlate, transcendental or meditational jazz, much the same way George Harrison came in contact with a sitar-playing guru resulting from which elements of sitar musical idioms manifested in some of the works of the Beatles; the highly cosmic “Across the Universe,” which was written and sang by John

Lennon, was also a product of such contact with Eastern religion and philosophies. Santana's spirituality and worldview expanded immensely from this contact and that found expression in the music and the collaborative efforts that drew personnel from across the world. From that point on, Santana's otherwise open-mindedness to musical influences and personnel crescendoed and led to wider and more variegated musical influences and personnel from across the world joining Santana in a virtually endless string of collaborative works that reflected on the universality of the emergent music and lyrics.

While Santana pandered to the needs of his teeming fans whose desire is either to shuffle their feet on the dance floor or to hear lyrics that sooth the everyday needs of the senses, he infused deep spiritual messages in some of the songs. For instance, in "Shades of Time," taken from *Santana I* (1969), Santana demands: "tell me the things that you see" and on realizing that his subject is, perhaps, incapable of "seeing," he asks: "or is it sometime that you need." Thereafter, he categorically says "all of the things that you've done; I'm certain that you had your fun." Here, Santana is referring to man's everyday thoughts, words, actions and inactions, how he has taken delight in them irrespective of how harmful they are to others and the earth environment and how these have impaired his ability to see the truth of the deep meaning of life. So he advises: "go out and make it better" and encourages thus: "you can make it if you try" and emphasizes: "try to make it better." Here, Santana places the onus of making things right and better on the individual and not on another person (a savior, intercessor etc) who "comes in the night [and] says he can make things go right." Implicit in this line is the repudiation of the concept of vicarious atonement or remission of sins. He concludes the song with a message of hope as he says: "I know that soon come a day things will start coming your way."

From *Abraxas* (1970), we take the enigmatic "Incident at Neshabur," which has consistently defied categorization within the context of the known genres of music and it still remains a source of curiosity for the critic. The enigma and resultant frustration are exacerbated by the fact that the track is an instrumental and therefore there are no words to give away any ideas of the emotions expressed. Perhaps if the critic knows where Neshabur is and a little history of the locale then he can attempt to determine the "incident" under reference and to put the classical work in perspective and determine its spirituality or otherwise; the capacity to see and the perception and understanding of what is seen constitute the theme of

“Hope You're Feeling Better,” which is also taken from *Abraxas*. While there is lack of clarity of whether the song focused on the spirituality of the individual or addressed the influence of aphrodisiacs that was the collective experience of the hippie culture of the 1970s, the song talked about “eyes slowly fading” and “mind full of tears.” It also talks about “look[ing] across the ocean, thinking nothing is really there” and “waiting for the sunshine, when all you see is glare.” While a mind full of tears is reflective of regrets for actions and experiences or expression of pain from the action of others, we note the consistent reference to the ability or inability to see in the works.

The capacity to see, which is at the core of “Shades of Time” and, as indicated above, was greyly alluded to in “Hope You're Feeling Better,” reemerges with indisputable clarity in “Taboo,” which is taken from *Santana III* (1971). Here, Santana sings: “I can't say why my open eyes can't see; so much to look by; so many things to be; can't keep looking in and out of me.” In “Everybody's Everything,” (*Santana III*), Santana sings about a new world order (“the new change”) in which “everything's to share” and encourages humanity to “let [its] head be free,” so as to “turn the wisdom key.” Here, Santana targets the state of mind of the individual with special reference to having an open mind and venturing into the realm as he encourages the individual not to be inhibited saying: “get off your cold feet...something on your back, lay it down;” and ends by giving the individual a sense of social or spiritual duty and responsibility thus: “your light might shine this whole town,” which carries with it a sense of accomplishment. Also from the same album, “Everything's Coming Our Way” commences softly by urging thus: “open your eyes let it begin with me, brand new day, fresh new way to live; the morning is calling; walk with me into the sun.” Thereafter, it emphasizes the universal brotherhood of man, the common source of humanity and the consequent need to live harmoniously when, in the last verse it says: “no man stands alone; Sister, Brother, from all the same seed.”

In “Stone Flower,” taken from *Caravanserai* (1972), Santana paints a rather optimistic picture of the future as he sings: “all around there is a feeling in the air, that with the grace of time we'll be getting closer there.” However, he expresses despair as he observes that: “day by day I can see them walk away; and I wonder, Lord, will they ever learn that this world is a perfect place to live?” Thereafter, he encourages humanity to: “look into your heart, find the love that's there to give, realize that the secret is to share.”



In “Just in Time to see the Sun,” which, like “Stone Flower,” is taken from *Caravanserai*, Santana sings: “growing darkness never leaves me just in time to see the sun; and every shadow disbelieves me making mine a longer run; clouds will pass and leave their thunder; just a warning to be heard; all you people sit and wonder if the Lord will wash away their sins.” In this song with the message obscurantized, Santana alludes to the compelling commands of the senses that darken man's capacity to see the light. He offers that, consumed in this darkness of the clouds and addicted to his permissive philosophies, man does not heed the warning of the thunders, which are products of the clouds that he (man) generated; rather, man deludes himself in the belief that “the Lord will wash away his sins.” Again, the futility of the belief in the vicarious atonement of sins reechoes here.

In “Love Devotion and Surrender,” which, incidentally, is not taken from the album by the same title, Santana sings thus: “listen, if you're tired of running and getting nowhere, I know there is a path that leads towards the Master: love, devotion and surrender.” Utilizing a female voice in what turned out to be a two-male-one-female trio, the song continues: “Oh brother, listen to the rhythm of your heartbeat, its keeping time with all the universal children.” Following the musical interlude of mellow mood organ and a guitar-organ harmonic call, another male voice sings: “Sister, sing this song through the ages for your brother; louder, till the heart embraces all the harmony: love, devotion and surrender.” Quite explicit, like “Stone Flower” and unlike the obscurantism of “Just in Time to See the Sun,” here, the spiritual message is simple and explicit: humanity must look within to achieve universal harmony and this is easily achievable through love for your fellow man, and devotion and total surrender to the will of God.

In “Give and Take,” which is taken from *Borboletta* (1974), Santana ministers thus: “Early in the morning; get your concentration; on your meditation; so you can find direction to future destination;” concentration, meditation, direction and future destination clearly indicate mode of communion with the Divine, the belief that there are destinations for the soul beyond planet earth and that the next destination is a function of the individual's thoughts, words, actions and inactions based on the second-by-second choices his soul makes between the soft whispers of the spirit and the compelling demands of the senses. We note that, regarding the multiplicity of destinations in the universal context, the Man from Galilee said: “In my



Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.” (John, 14:2) Subjecting the two-sentence declaration to a brief critical analysis, it is clear that the first segment of the first sentence would have sufficed in delivering the message but Jesus emphasized it in the second segment and, in the second sentence, furthered by promising his listeners a place there. Returning to Santana, on the belief in the universal brotherhood of man, which is the fundamental essence of all religious creeds, and the need for harmony in humanity, he offers as follows in “Give and Take:” “Talk about your country; there's really no such thing for me; the whole world is one big family.”

In all of the above, Santana avoids the contentious issue of religion; rather, he directly or through allusions talks about the spirituality of man and how man is to be held accountable for all his deeds. In virtually every song in this category, Santana explicitly talks about the one-on-one relationship between man and his God and the need for universal harmony, which he holds is the only way forward for humanity in the spiritual and cosmic realm that, he emphasizes, is the essence of man's presence on earth. We note that not in any of his spiritual songs did he mention Buddha; neither did he mention Jesus Christ nor His Abrahamic cousin, Mohamed. For Santana, the path to finding harmony with God is one and the laws are universal: it applies in equal measure to all in humanity irrespective of color, creed, station or location. This contrasts with the multiplicity of creeds, doctrines, dogmas, saviors, averters and intercessors who claim that all other paths except theirs lead to perdition.

### **“Novus:” An Analysis of a Magnum Opus**

*Webster's Dictionary* (2006:767) defines 'magnum opus' as “the chief [greatest] work of an artist; a masterpiece.” It is based on the meaning this definition vis-à-vis the analysis contained herein that this effort contends that “Novus” is the magnum opus of Carlos Santana with special reference to the spiritual consciousness that he endeavored and continues to endeavor to inculcate on humanity over a timeframe of more than four decades. Still from Webster's (2006:866), the word Novus is, succinctly, defined as “a new order of the ages.” For effectiveness in the enterprise of conducting an analysis of the song “Novus,” we shall, first, take the liberty of reproducing the essential part of the lyrics of the song; thereafter, we shall subject the lyrics, structure and the instrumentation of the song to critical analysis.

**Novus**

Looking into the future  
We can see the beginning  
Children living in peace and harmony  
That is the way it will be.

Ferocious winds, emanating from God knows where, howl from a great distance and stir up gigantic ocean waves that, much unlike the limpid waters of lagoons, pound the coastlines across planet earth. The waters soak zillions of grains of sand on winding and luminously incandescent beaches that constitute the recreational haven for millions of humans who throng holiday resorts, worldwide, in search of sun and fun and who fill their lungs a thousand and one times with the clean air and savor the aphrodisiac of surfing the wind-propelled and sustained waves, albeit momentarily.

The above prose captures the “sound verse” that opened the song “Novus.” Listening to the sounds of nature, laid back and with eyes closed, one could drift off on the wings of his thoughts to lands far and near, especially to the beaches where the life-sustaining elements of water, air and land converge for their God-ordained responsibility of nourishing and invigorating human vitality under the keenly watchful eyes of the sun and moon.

The song takes the ardent listener of transcendental (meditational) jazz and similar songs of other musical genres through dramatic emotional swing within which the guitar commences by joining the sounds of ocean waves with a laid-back introductory riff on nylon guitar and then gently shifts to electric guitar, which starts on the slow pace (to sustain the gentle mood, which is in sync with the customary mood of the nylon guitar, and, perhaps, prepares the unsuspecting listener for the surprise) and then assumes an upbeat tempo as it increases octave, climaxes at a high and intense pitch and, in a dramatic change of attitude and musical altitude, if you prefer, returns to the mellow mode and mood that formed the introductory riff. For the ardent listener who is sufficiently involved and evolved in the art, the mood swings on the guitar has the capacity of taking him through equal swings of emotion. The eternal sustain (the cry), which is the trademark of Carlos Santana, compels watery eyes and threatens a few teardrops for the Santana devotee. Again, the shire intensity and pitch of the guitar solo that is complemented by the equally high pitch of Placido Domingo's operatic

tenor vocal delivery provide the necessary ingredient for the dreamer to sail away to lands far and wide and perhaps to climes that fresh and blood, as we know them, have not ventured.

The urgency and intensity of the guitar lamentation in “Novus” and the fact that the song is captured in the album curiously titled *Shaman* leads one to ask: what is the hidden meaning/message? To answer this deep and subjective question, one must take into consideration the facts that: (1) Santana is of Mexican origin (2) He had written a song titled “Future Primitive, and (3) He is sufficiently exposed to the tenets of Eastern religion and philosophies to the point he took the title Devadip. Taken against the backdrop of the title of the album, one is inclined to further ask: Is Carlos Santana of the Mayan stock—an American Indian tribe that populates parts of Peru, Bolivia, Guatemala and Mexico? (Waisbard, 1979; McFadden, 2002) If this fundamental question is answered in the affirmative (and that is the most likely inclination), then the conclusion would be as follows:

1. Santana is, naturally, knowledgeable of the Mayan belief system based on the peculiar Mayan experience and mysterious calendar that has, uncannily, been accurate in its prediction of world events over the centuries,
2. Santana assumes the role of a shaman (an astronomer-priest in the Mayan tradition) in the song as in a lot of his works;
3. “Novus,” musically and lyrically, addresses the predicted apocalypse or drastic change in the world spiritual and material order of 2012 and implicitly admonishes humanity to desist from the path of perdition and pursue love, global peace and harmony,
4. The opening effects of the song depicted water, wind, earth and fire (sun): four of the five elements that are revered in Mayan theology (Joseph, 2007), and
5. The song “Future Primitive” is in reference to the state of human civilization (life on earth) after 2012; obviously a reference to the likely survivors of the predicted apocalypse or transformation. The paradox of this title finds correlation with the two lines in “Novus” that say thus: “looking into the future, we can see the beginning.” A beginning that is in the future.

Cast in the mold of the Santana tradition of guitar-voice or guitar-another instrument duet, “Novus” is, basically, a duet between guitar on one

hand and voice on the other hand; the voice being that of Spanish operatic tenor Plácido Domingo who has been cast in various appellative molds: *The Guardian* referred to him as: "The greatest operatic artist of modern times;" and for *Newsweek* and *Corriere della Sera*, he is "King of Opera" and "A True Renaissance man of music," respectively. On the part of the guitar, Santana takes the listener on a musical pendulum swing between two extremes: the highly emotional mellow mood of nylon strings and pulse-pumping pulsating rock riffs and runs of electric guitar; at both extremes, the trained ear could hear the passionate appeals of the nylon strings and the supplication laced with threats and strong warning of dire consequences from the electric guitar, which, in a manner of speaking, captures and sums up every element of Santana's musico-spiritual ministration from "Shades of Time" (1969) to the present "Novus" (2002).

Exploring the concept of duet within the framework of the works of Santana, we note that "Black Magic Woman" was, essentially, a guitar-voice duet and so was "Hope You're Feeling Better" on the B-side of the hit single. While the highly emotional "Samba Pati" could pass as a guitar monologue, it featured a guitar-organ duet somewhere along the musical line. "Soul Sacrifice," which Santana performed at Woodstock, took a guitar-organ call-response stance in what still passes as a duet. For further instances, "Europa," the commercially successful and anthemic "Oye Como Va," and even the enigmatic "Incident at Neshabur" all indicate a strong dose of guitar dominance in one form of duet or the other. The model, if we may utilize that terminology here, is a common feature of the works of Santana; argument abound that this model is reflective of the egotistic or narcissistic element in Carlos Santana, which reflects an element of the megalomania that is not uncommon with superstars of the ilk of Santana, while on the other side of the perception divide the model is seen as an inevitable product of the mastery and creative genius in Carlos Santana. All said and done, it was from this model that "Novus" was sculptured and delivered.

In what could pass as a concise assessment of the works of Santana within the global context, Osai (2006) offers that drawing from a global configuration of artistes such as Jose Feliciano, Michael Jackson, Eric Clapton, Gabor Szabo, Sri Chinmoy, Mahavishnu John McLaughlin, Plácido Domingo, Shakira, Seal, Ozomatli, Steven Tyler, Sean Paul, Michael Olatunji, Airto Moreira, Gloria Estefan, Jennifer Lopez, Eros Ramazzotti, Flora Purin, Leon Patilo, Eagle-eye Cherry, Mana, Wyclef Jean, Michelle Branch, Musiq, Macy Gray, POD, Alejandro Lerner, Chad Kroeger, Citizen Cope,

Dido, Sarah Vaughn and a host of others in various musical collaborations in a period of more than four decades, Santana, continually, updated, reinvented and reshaped the landscape of the known universe's musical culture and in every one of his works, people from diverse cultures of the world found and still find something to take home and call their own. In the lyrical universalism of his works, Santana sought to reawaken man to his spiritual uniqueness, which transcends socioeconomic, cultural and national boundaries, race, creed and the dogmas of all organized religion—an approach to communion with the universal source of all energy that emphasizes the brotherhood of man and personal relationship with God as against the predisposition of organized religion.

## Conclusion

Carlos Augusto Alves Santana was born on July 20, 1947 at Autlan de Navarro, Jalisco, Mexico. He moved to the US during his teens; in the late sixties and early seventies, he became famous and his band, Santana, pioneered rock, salsa and jazz fusion. The novel and exotic sound of his band featured his melodic, blues-based guitar riffs set against Latin rhythmic patterns and featuring percussive instruments such as timbales and congas, who were hitherto not utilized and consequently unheard in rock music. *Rolling Stone* named him number 15 on their list of the 100 Greatest Guitarists of All Time in 2003 and he won 10 Grammy Awards and 3 Latin Grammy Awards. A major feature of the music of Santana is the Anglo-Latin bilingualism that governs the lyrics of every album. While this creates greater receptivity in the Latin American world of Santana's origin, the global receptivity of the concept of multilingualism extends that goodwill to other parts of the world; that, generally, translated to commercial success of the albums. This is reflective of universal lyricism or, if you prefer, lyrical universalism. Interestingly, of the thirty-one albums produced by Santana, eight have titles that are not English; this approximates to twenty-five percent.

Over the decades, it has become obvious that the mission of Santana transcends recording and performance; he has proven to be a strong advocate of peaceful coexistence in humanity and global oneness. Accordingly, he holds that his higher quest is to “let [people] know that they are themselves, multidimensional spirits with enormous possibilities and

opportunities...[and to] present them with a new form of existence that transcends religion, politics and the modus operandi of education today.” (*Rolling Stone*, 1999) Without being drawn into the contentious issue of religion and the supernatural, we shall take home from the above the transcendence of religion, and politics in the universalism of Santana's lyricism.

In “Novus,” Santana assumes the role of a shaman, which is defined as “a tribal medicine man or wizard among certain North American Indians.” (Webster's 2006:1155) “Novus” is a musical convergence of the smooth nerve-soothing effects of nylon strings and the exhilarating compulsion of rock riffs; between these two musical extremes the listener is not deprived of the lamentations (the guitar cries) of eternally prolonged sustain of notes that impact on the heart, which is the musical trademark of Carlos Santana. Here, Carlos practically tears his heart out in obvious musical lamentation on guitar; and this is taken to such pitch that the listener practically feels and, therefore, shares the pains that are expressed; pains of a perfectly created world of harmony being shredded by unnecessary manmade disharmony. This is what has consistently been the theme of the musico-spiritual ministrations and mission of Carlos Santana, which he so effectively captured in both his lyrical universalism and the guitar lamentations that are peculiar to him from “Shades of Time” (1969) to “Novus” (2002). It is therefore not fortuitous that “Novus” is contained in an album titled *Shaman*; it is symbolic.

A look at the cover of *Shaman* shows a mix of influences that only an art critic can put words to; matter-of-factly, the cover has the capacity of evoking a million words; not just the thousand words that it is said that a picture is worth. However, what stands out and is easily decipherable even by a novice in art appreciation is that the painting reflects the face of Santana adorned in a bowler hat and surrounded by numerous human faces and other articles of music and artifacts of Mayan mysticism and Eastern religion and philosophy. It is also very interesting to note that the twilight that adorns the back cover of the album gives the music and art critic the liberty to decide if it is sunset or sunrise; in other words: is the world coming to an end in 2012 or will it be a period of reawakening and transition to a new harmonious consciousness and transformation in humanity? (Reader's Digest, 1976; Joseph, 2007) McFadden (2002) offers a two-way answer: it could eventually result in the death of two-thirds of humanity (Armageddon of sorts) or lead to positive transformation of life on earth as we know it with special reference to

interpersonal relationship; either way, the outcome will be a reflection of the degree to which man is conscious of what is expected of him during the transition period that we live in now and what actions he takes: does he intensify the divisive tendencies in humanity or does he reach out to his neighbor (fellow man) and forge a cordial relationship based on mutual respect, the treatment of Earth with the respect, care and love it deserves and love, devotion and surrender to the will of God. McFadden furthers that the Mayan calendar is not an instrument for tracking the procession of time but a meter and measure of the evolution of human consciousness, which is what Santana has consistently harped on in his spiritual songs. Either way, Santana's posturing on the back cover is read to be that of a modern-day musical shaman guiding the viewer/listener, with his intense gaze into the eyes of the viewer, hypnotically steering him in the direction of the twilight to which his guitar clearly points.

Over the years and through numerous songs, from "Shades of Time" (1969) to "Novus," (2002) the musico-spiritual ministrations and mission of Carlos Santana to humanity have centered on his belief in the inexorable realities of the karmic cause-and-effect essence of spiritual growth: every individual is spiritually accountable for all his thoughts, words, actions and inactions irrespective of color or creed, station or location; in other words, the repudiation of vicarious atonement of sins. Can Santana be more universal in his lyrical universalism or his musico-spiritual ministrations? Can he go deeper in communicating his spirituality through words and musical motif? This is doubtful; it is, therefore, opined that "Novus" is quintessence Santana, his magnum opus and, therefore, valedictory. Like Volkswagen's advertisement that heralded the Santana model on its debut in the global automobile marketplace, "there is nothing more to add." Carlos Santana has said his bit; there is nothing more to add; or is there?

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